

# Booth, Lincoln Slayer, Escaped, Niece Admits

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## Posse Missed Assassin, Who Survived Crime 38 Years; Killed Self in 1903.

Minneapolis, Minn., Feb. 21.—John Wilkes Booth, murderer of Abraham Lincoln, escaped. This was admitted here today by his niece, Blanche Booth, breaking the 60-year silence of the Booth family regarding the fate of the assassin.

In an interview given exclusively to the International News Service, Miss Booth refuted the statement made on February 17, by Edward Harper Sampson, of Moline, Ill., one of the guards supposed to have killed Booth, that with his death the secret of the burial place of Booth's body would be lost. She believes that Sampson knew that Booth was not killed by his pursuers.

After fighting off interviewers for years, Miss Booth finally revealed that the story of Finis L. Bates was true, thus settling a controversy that has raged for years, since it was announced that Booth was killed in a barn on the Garrett plantation in Virginia.

"John Wilkes Booth met his mother a year after the assassination and told her about the plot, its execution and his carefully planned escape," Miss Booth said. "They met in San Francisco after he had gone from Canada to Mexico and had arranged for a meeting there. She repeatedly told members of the family that she had seen her son and that he had told her all about it."

Miss Booth was for a considerable period a member of the company of her uncle, Edwin Booth.

She has lived for many years in Minneapolis and was out of touch with other members of the family until the recent visit of a relative who continues to follow the stage tradition.

Here are the high lights of her amazing interview:

John Wilkes Booth lived 38 years after the death of Lincoln and his own supposed death, and died by his own hand in 1903 at Enid, Okla., at the age of 65.

He was seen by his mother in San Francisco a year after his escape.

He revealed his identity twice, once when he believed he was dying and once on his death bed.

He produced a photograph proving his identity which was identified by Edwin Booth and Joseph Jefferson.

He left behind him a sworn statement declaring that Andrew Johnson, vice-president who succeeded Lincoln, not only suggested the crime but arranged for his escape.

"The man killed in the barn on the Garrett plantation near Bowling Green, Va., was named Ruddy," Miss Booth declared. "Booth had escaped from the Garrett plantation nearly five hours earlier."

The story of Finis L. Bates, greatest authority on the subject, is true, Miss Booth said.

### Body Examined.

At the time of his death, Booth was known as David E. George, and he pointed out physical characteristics that answered the description of Booth. The body has been embalmed so that it will remain intact 100 years. It was examined in 1923, 19 years after his death, according to the story Miss Booth has admitted is true.

"John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated President Lincoln at Ford's theater on the evening of April 14, 1865, died by his own hand of poison in the Grand Avenue hotel at Enid, Okla., on January 13, 1903," Miss Booth said today.

"Authentic photographs of John Wilkes Booth are in the possession of authorities, that were taken of him at the ages of 27—before he murdered the president—at 38, eleven years after the assassination, and nineteen years after his death in Enid.

"Prominent men holding that Booth was not killed in the Garrett barn have exhausted the subject with their inquiries only to come to the conclusion that he lived to be 65 years old under the name of John St. Helen and David E. George."

### Tintype Identified.

Finis L. Bates, probably the greatest authority on the subject, knew John Wilkes Booth as John St. Helen at Grand Berry, Texas. It was there, when Booth was deathly ill, that he confessed to Bates his true identity and presented him with a tintype which was later identified by members of Booth's own family and by Joseph Jefferson, the actor.

Later, according to Blanche Booth, Dr. Clarence True Wilson, retired lobbyist for the Methodist Episcopal church in Washington, D. C. spent years in going over records pertaining to the death. His conclusion, as will soon be published in a volume of his own, is that secret service guards under Colonel Baker missed their man at the Garrett barn and that David E. George, who died in Enid, Oklahoma, was the true assassin of Lincoln.

At the present time one of the foremost capitalists of the United States, Judge Elbert H. Gary, president of the United States Steel Corporation is devoting his spare time to hounding down the mystery that has surrounded Booth's death, Miss Booth said.

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## Says He Recently Viewed Preserved Body of Booth

Washington, Feb. 21.—The body of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of Abraham Lincoln, is at Memphis, Tenn., in a "perfect state of preservation," Dr. Clarence True Wilson, who has made an exhaustive investigation of the Lincoln shooting, told International News Service this afternoon.

"I saw the body several months ago," said Dr. Wilson, "finding on it many marks of identification which prove conclusively that the man was Booth."

"When I was a boy in Maryland, I was told the story of Booth's escape from his pursuers by several persons, who were themselves in the plot. Since that time I've been gathering proof that Lincoln's slayer was not killed by soldiers, as generally believed."

"At the time soldiers from Washington were searching for Booth in lower Maryland, near here, the slayer was riding horseback and on his way west."

"Gerald Ruddy was the man shot and killed. His body was turned over to the Booth family and was buried in Baltimore."

One of the marks by which he identified the body in Memphis as that of Booth, Dr. Wilson said, was a cut over his left eye.

"Booth's body was never buried," Wilson continued. "It was turned over to an old couple in Memphis. The man died several months ago and his wife now cares for the body."

He declined to give this woman's name or her address in Memphis.

"In investigating the circumstances of Booth's escape, I talked to all members of his family," Dr. Wilson said. "They all knew about it. Most of them saw and talked with him after he fled from Washington. The story told by his niece in Minneapolis is true. She saw her uncle just before he died."

Dr. Wilson characterized as "absurd" the story of the man in Moline, Ill., who said he was the only one who knew where Booth was buried.

"That man's name is not mentioned in any of the stories concerning Booth," Dr. Wilson said. "There was no secret about the burial of the body believed to be that of Booth. The government turned it over to the family of Booth four years after Lincoln's assassination."

## Family Identification Accepted by Historians

Baltimore, Feb. 21.—(By the Associated Press.)—The records of Greenmount cemetery, this city, show that John Wilkes Booth, assassin of President Lincoln, was buried in the Booth family plot there on June 6, 1869.

According to the records of the Maryland Historical society, Booth's body was brought here from Washington on February 13 of the same year and was kept in a vault at Greenmount until final interment.

"The family fully identified the body as that of John Wilkes Booth, all statements to the contrary, notwithstanding," a statement taken from the records of the historical society declares.

Many versions of the burial of John Wilkes Booth have been in circulation for years, but the generally accepted belief here is that the body of the assassin was buried on the ground floor of the old Washington penitentiary and later was removed, at the request of his relatives, to Greenmount cemetery, Baltimore.

To support this account, students of history have produced what appears to be original documents exchanged in the correspondence between members of the Booth family and the war department relating to the removal to Baltimore.

## Civil War Figure Reveals Version Long His Secret

Chicago, Feb. 21.—(By Associated Press.)—Colonel James Hamilton Davidson, former commander of the 122nd Infantry, today revealed what he said was the burial place of John Wilkes Booth, assassin of President Abraham Lincoln. Colonel Davidson, who lives here with a daughter, believes he is the only living man who knows. Recently Edwin Harper Sampson, who had said he was one of seven men who disposed of Booth's body, died in Moline, Ill., without revealing what had been done with the body.

Colonel Davidson said he was in command at Portsmouth, Va., on the night of Booth's burial and was told of it by Colonel Baker, head of the secret service of the army.

Booth's body was buried in the